

**US – Mexico Border 2012 Environmental Program
Arizona Sonora Regional Work Group Meeting
June 5, 2003 from 2:00-6:00 PM
Loews Ventana Canyon Resort
7000 N. Resort Dr. Tucson, Arizona 85750**

- **WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

The meeting started with welcome and opening remarks by moderator Michael Montgomery.

The meeting was headed by: Steve Owens, Director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Angel Lopez Guzmán, representing the Secretariat of Urban Infrastructure and Ecology of Sonora, Laura Yoshii, Deputy Regional Administrator US EPA, and José Luis Luna, Federal Delegate for Mexico's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources for the state of Sonora.

- **DESCRIPTION OF MEETING GOALS**

Steve Owens stated the need to address the environmental issues in the border such as air quality, water quality, soil contamination and better environmental health. He also stressed the importance of continuing to work together.

Angel Lopez Guzmán, stressed the need for cooperation in planning and to create and enforce policies to improve air and water quality, and environmental health.

José Luis Luna discussed the status of border contamination and explained how maquiladoras and factories contribute to this problem. He also stressed the importance of working together in a coordinated fashion because both countries share the border. Luna also recognized the excellent coordination it maintains with EPA. The agencies worked together in the elaboration of the Border 2012 program and are committed to make it work. "It is important to continue working together," he remarked.

Laura Yoshii welcomed participants and stressed the importance of everybody's participation in this process. "It is important to have a common understanding to address the border problems," she said. She also stated that it is vital to stay focused to continue monitoring progress and share information. Yoshii stated that EPA is committed to continue working in this process.

- **BORDER 2012 PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

There was a video presentation of Border 2012. This video presented an overview of the Border 2012 Program. It gave a summary of the program's mission, its background and objectives, and the results the program aims to achieve.

- **STRUCTURE – TASK FORCES**

Slide presentation by Tomas Torres, EPA San Diego Border Office. Information presented on the roles and responsibilities of the regional workgroup, which are:

- Identify and prioritize regional environmental issues.

- Refer issues that have borderline implications to border wide workgroups and policy forums.
- Designate task forces to work on regional environmental issues.
- Assist task forces in identifying funding sources.

Torres went on to explain the guidelines for the operation of the task forces, such as: transparency and open dialogue, communication and coordination, roles and responsibilities, and capacity building. Operational guidelines have been developed and copies were made available in the front registration area.

- **PROCESS – BUDGET**

Slide presentation by Gary Wolinsky, EPA's Border Program. Mr. Wolinsky explained the Border 2012 competitive project funding. The presentation included an explanation of: the competitive award process, program objectives, eligibility criteria, and the process followed to evaluate and rank the solicitors.

- **ARIZONA/SONORA PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Plácido dos Santos, Border Programs Manager for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), gave a presentation on project implementation in the Arizona/Sonora region. He focused his discussion on current project and activities, including those led by other organizations. Mr. dos Santos stated that the implementation of projects includes partners from various sectors – state, tribal, non-governmental organizations and non-profit organizations.

ADEQ's border program encompasses ambient air quality, water quality and waste management. Activities are conducted by a multi-media team with comprehensive responsibilities that include: monitoring, planning, outreach, advocacy and coordination. Some current projects led by ADEQ are:

- Air Quality Studies – Ambient air quality monitoring in Ambos Nogales and Douglas/Agua Prieta, and a preliminary field assessment in Yuma/San Luis Río Colorado.
- Air Quality Outreach – Community outreach and education as well as binational intergovernmental dialogue aimed at improving the air quality in Ambos Nogales.
- Water Infrastructure Activities – Provide support to border communities in planning, permitting, project oversight and funding.
- Water Quality Technical Projects – Activities have focused on binational monitoring and sampling in relation to the PCE plume in Nogales Wash, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the University of Sonora to provide technical support in conducting water quality sampling of transboundary watersheds in the region, and an MOU with the Sonora Drinking Water and Wastewater Commission for pretreatment technical support.
- Emergency Response and Preparedness – Provide support to the development and implementation of binational sister-city contingency plans for the region, which includes training courses and simulation exercises.
- Waste Management – Capacity building for compliance and outreach focused on hazardous waste management through the Arizona/Sonora Hazardous and Solid Waste and Enforcement Workgroup under the previous Border XXI Program. Activities also include working with Arizona and Sonora industries in the border region for voluntary pollution prevention outreach and implementation through the AMIGO Program.

Additionally, there are several EPA funded programs led by tribal governments and non-governmental or non-profit organizations. Examples include:

- Tribal Programs and Projects – Coordination of border environmental issues for tribes in Arizona and a water quality assessment project by the Tohono O'odham Nation.

- Non-Governmental / Non-Profit Organizations – Some of the organizations and projects that are in place are the Western Governors Association’s development of a Border Energy Web Site and an air emissions inventory for Mexico; Western Arizona Area Health Education Center in Yuma for community outreach on air quality impacts related to asthma; the Mariposa Health Center in Nogales for community outreach on environmental health impacts and preventive actions; and a sustainable development outreach program in the Upper San Pedro area.

- **LOCAL PERSPECTIVES FROM PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS**

Presenter José Luis Luna, SEMARNAT. Mr. Luna gave a presentation of slides that highlighted the main issues identified during the public meetings held in Sonora. The main problems were: air pollution, tire burning, truck emissions, deforestation, and lack of water. In the question and answer session a participant asked how to get updates from the decisions of the workgroups for the Arizona-Sonora Projects. An Internet address was given where information will be available www.adeq.state.az.us.

- **PROGRESS REPORTS FROM SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS**

Rick Van Schoik, Managing Director of the Southwest Center for Environmental Research and Policy (SCERP) proceeded to show a slide presentation. He presented an overview: SCERP is a consortium of five U.S. and five Mexican universities which serves the U.S.-Mexican border residents by applying research information, insights and innovations to environmental challenges in the region. SCERP was created in 1989 to initiate a comprehensive analysis of possible solutions to acute air, water, and hazardous waste problems that plague the United States-Mexican border region and collaborates with Border 2012, states, tribes, local governments, and private industry. Mission: Sustainability Science for a Better Border. SCERP’s mission leads to discovery, learning and innovations, environmental quality, ecological integrity and human environmental health. SCERP has worked on over 300 applied projects to inform the decision making process through unbiased inquiry and interpretation. The consortium works to build local capacity, make connections, educate and train and optimize investment. There are ongoing projects dealing with: air; environmental information and management; energy; health; natural resources; and water quality, supply and reuse. SCERP publishes findings in a series of monographs and other papers and will conduct its annual conference on February 11, 12 and 13 of 2004 in Laredo, Texas. Papers, panels, presentations and posters for the conference are now being accepted.

Fernando Macías, General Manager of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), and Raúl Rodríguez of the North American Development Bank (NADBank or NADB), presented an overview of these sister institutions. They were created under the auspices of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The BECC and the NADB are working with more than 100 communities throughout the US – Mexico border region to address their environmental infrastructure needs. More than US\$28.24 million has been allocated by BECC’s technical assistance programs to aid in the development of 200 environmental infrastructure projects related to water, sewage, and municipal waste in 115 communities on both sides of the US – Mexico border. Through its technical assistance programs, the NADB has authorized US\$10.6 million in grant funding to carry out 139 institutional strengthening and project development studies for 75 border communities. To date the BECC has certified 70 environmental infrastructure projects, which will cost an estimated US\$1.58 billion to build, 41 of the certified projects are located in the United States and 29 are located in Mexico. The NADB is working with the sponsors of 61 certified projects who have requested financial assistance. As of March 31, 2003, the NADB has authorized just over US\$487 million in loans and/or grant resources to partially finance 56 infrastructure projects estimated to cost a total of US\$1.39 billion. Access to information and reports is available at www.nadb.org.

- **OPEN DISCUSSION OF LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES**

The participants were invited to an open discussion of environmental priorities:

The Tohono O'odham Nation presented a video explaining the Nation's perceived needs. Ty Cañez explained the video. It showed current problems existing within the Tohono O'odham Nation, principally associated with a lack of funds. Most of the Nation's funds are spent in dealing with the effects of the transit through "their back yard" of undocumented immigrants that cross the border and all the problems that their transit generates. When they cross they leave a lot of trash behind, most of the police resources are dedicated to stopping undocumented immigrants, hospital resources also have to go to undocumented immigrants who need emergency health services. They stated that they need more federal funding to resolve some of these issues.

The Tohono O'odham Nation has many concerns, such as solid waste (trash) along the border and the destruction of natural resources.

Colin Soto, Chairman of the Cocopah Council of Elders, stressed the importance of outreach to tribes in Mexico, which are the same people and the same Nation who have little resources. Regulations have to be changed in order for the Indian Nations to interact with their Mexican brothers and sisters. These are the same people in two countries and laws and regulations that do not allow for the US tribes to help their kind. "There are more Cocopah people in Mexico than in the U.S.," he said.

Gildardo Acosta from the City of Agua Prieta and Enlace Ecológico, stated that in the Agua Prieta and Cananea areas there is a water analysis project that detects water contaminants. They still don't know the extent of the problem, but need to take this into consideration to protect the people. They also tested and detected organic solvents that will impact the water and soil. They need at least \$75,000 to establish three monitoring wells.

María Josefina Guerrero from Nogales, Sonora stated that changes in government administrations, have led to new "agendas" and she has been waiting for seven years for change that will address and improve community needs. The main issues impacting Ambos Nogales are in relation to the Infrastructure Plan (s) and are extremely important.

- **TASK FORCE MODELS**

Presenter, Michèle Kimpel Guzmán from Air Quality in Ambos Nogales and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality: She presented and spoke about a summary of the Air Quality study of Ambos Nogales. She presented the background for the study describing emissions affecting ambient air quality and public health impacts. The overall goals are to "take actions to improve air quality and public health in Ambos Nogales." The Air Quality Program in Ambos Nogales aims to become a Regional Border 2012 Task Force.

Arizona/Sonora Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force: John Rothman of the US EPA described the provisional goal of this task force, which is "to address and resolve transboundary and binational environmental compliance and enforcement in matters related to public health, wildlife, and natural resources." They have been meeting quarterly, as a combined regional sub-group for enforcement and hazardous and solid waste, since the fall of 1996. A fact sheet on the activities of this group was made available to the meeting participants.

Lauren Volpini, US EPA Presenter: Ms. Volpini briefed the group on a meeting held on June 4th in Rio Rico, AZ to organize a Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force under Border 2012. Over 20 US and Mexico local, federal and state agencies participated, including José Luis Luna, SEMARNAT Delegado and Border 2012 co-chair. The proposed task force has identified a preliminary list of 10 goals and objectives. These include updating the four Sister City Emergency Response Plans to include public health preparedness

and counter-terrorism components. Other priorities include addressing first responder indemnification issues for cross border movement of personnel and equipment, binational communication needs such as the availability of equipment and common radio frequencies and, ensuring full border coverage for preparedness and response - in addition to the Sister Cities. Lic. Carlos Kitazawa, Director of the State of Sonora Protección Civil will serve as the leader of the Mexican delegation under the present administration. US leadership has not yet been determined.

Lic. Kitazawa praised the binational work that has been accomplished together in the Sister Cities of Ambos Nogales, Ambos San Luis, Agua Prieta/Douglas and Naco/Cochise County. He is looking forward to extending emergency preparedness beyond these municipalities to the entire AZ/Sonora border. He then presented a plaque of recognition from the state of Sonora to Lauren Volpini for her "valient leadership and support in the execution of the emergency response plans between Sonora and Arizona" over the past three years.

Steve Owens stated that before ending the meeting he would like to inform participants that five task forces were to move forward: Ambos Nogales Air Quality Group; Water Task Force; Children's Environmental Health Task Force; Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force; and Waste and Enforcement Task Force. Laura Yoshii stated that options to establishing a task force for environmental education would be explored by the co-chairs in the future. Participants were welcomed to sign up for any of the existing working groups.

End of meeting.